

## *Section 7:*

### *Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan*

An attractive environmental setting, which consists of wooded areas, rolling hills and landscape, wildlife habitats, wetlands, native vegetation, and small lakes and streams, is one of Sugar Grove's most important distinguishing characteristics. These natural features, together with parks, forest preserves, and other open spaces, provide scenic beauty and ecological diversity and contribute to Village's unique image and identity within the western suburbs and surrounding area.

The Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan is intended to help the Village maintain and preserve key environmental and open space features, enhance the countryside character of the area, provide for a more complete range of park and recreational areas to serve new and existing development, and to connect current and future residents of the community to the park system.

The Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan is illustrated on Figure 5.

### *Overview of the Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan*

Environmental protection is one of the primary objectives of the Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan. The Plan strives to set aside areas with special environmental and ecological value for protection from development. This creates natural areas, habitat for wildlife, and corridors for the natural flow of stormwater and the movement of wildlife.

A key feature of the Parks, Open Space and Greenway Plan are the "greenway corridors" which encompass wetlands, flood plains, distinctive plant communities to be preserved, and conceptual connections within residential areas. These will create a network of open space that enhances the residential neighborhoods and the image and character of the community.

This image is not only aesthetically pleasing but also essential to attracting and maintaining high quality commercial and residential development. People are attracted to beauty, quiet surroundings and recreational opportunities close to their neighborhoods and surrounding their Village.

The Plan also highlights other open space and environmental features, including existing and future park sites, Forest Preserve properties, recreational trails, and private recreational features. All of these open space elements are essential to the image and character of Sugar Grove.

### ***Greenway Corridors***

Greenway corridors, which help establish the overall structure of the open space system within Sugar Grove, generally follow surface watercourses and drainage ways defined by the flood of record, or, are conceptually illustrated as a direct connection linking park sites and open space areas in the residential areas

In a similar fashion to the famous Emerald Necklace Linear Park System created by Frederick Law Olmstead, the parks within Sugar Grove should be connected to each other, creating a safe and attractive network of greenways and open space that will provide a safe, off-street transportation system and provide a recreational amenity for the community.

Sugar Grove is uniquely positioned to establish greenways throughout most of the community. Many communities have recognized the benefits and popularity of a greenway and trail network after most development has occurred. The majority of residential growth in the Village of Sugar Grove however, will transpire in the future, providing the Village to require greenways through residential developments linking park sites to the entire park system.

Key natural features located within or near the greenway corridors include flood plains, wetlands, wooded areas, forested areas, and future parks sites.

#### **≠ *Watercourses and drainage ways.***

There are several watercourses that flow throughout the Village including Blackberry Creek, Lake Run, Big Rock Creek, Nelson Creek, Dugan Creek, and Welch Creek.

**≠ *Wetlands.*** Wetlands occur within the greenway corridors and in other isolated locations. They are defined by vegetation, hydric soils, and surface and ground water conditions.

**≠ *Forested Areas.*** Numerous mature woodlands and tree lines are located along and near the greenway corridors and in other areas of the community not yet subdivided/developed.

**≠ *Future Parks.*** Within each residential block, a centrally located neighborhood park is illustrated. Although the precise size and location cannot be determined until platting, it is important that the greenway network within Sugar Grove is incorporated into residential development and connects to neighborhood parks.

Figure 5 highlights the greenway corridors that should be preserved and protected in the future. These corridors will create a network of green space that enhances residential neighborhoods, provides linkages between land-use districts, and preserves the countryside image and character of the Village.

### ***Forest Preserve District of Kane County***

There are 4 forest preserves owned by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County within the planning area boundary of the Village of Sugar Grove. Three of the four forest preserves are located in the northern areas of Sugar Grove's Planning Area, and one is located in the southwest corner of the planning area.

*Hannaford Woods* is a 336 acre forest preserve located on Merrill Road. The site consists of 80 acres of wetlands and 60 acres of wooded areas. Blackberry Creek meanders through the preserve. The Virgil Gilman Trail also crosses through the forest preserve. Parking and restrooms are provided at the Hannaford Woods.

*Bliss Woods* is a 300 acre preserve comprised of 200 acres of woods and 65 acres of wetlands. Bliss Woods provides parking, toilets, grills, and shelters to visitors. There are also 40 camping sites within the preserve. The Virgil Gilman Trail connects to Bliss Woods.

*Prairie Kame* is a forest preserve considered to be an isolated, landmark sentinel overlooking the extensive outwash plains to the southwest. It is an 82-acre preserve consisting of prairie covered gravel on the leading edge of the great glaciers that moved through and retreated from the Sugar Grove area 12,000 years ago.

Big Rock Forest Preserve is located at the confluence of Big Rock Creek and Welch Creek in the southwest section of Sugar Grove's planning area. The 456-acre preserve contains a restored prairie and oak-hickory savannah woodland. The forest preserve is adjacent to Deer Valley Golf Course and Camp Dean, a Girl Scout Camp.

### ***Sugar Grove Park District***

In 2003 an overwhelming majority of the residents of Sugar Grove passed a referendum for the reorganization of the Sugar Grove Park District. Prior to the Park District's reorganization, the Village of Sugar Grove acquired, developed and maintained park sites within the community. The Village is now in the process of transferring ownership of all park sites in the community to the Park District. All maintenance, development, programming and scheduling responsibilities of parks within the Village of Sugar Grove are now the responsibility of the Sugar Grove Park District.

The existing and future parks within the Village of Sugar Grove are highlighted below.

#### ***Existing Parks***

Currently there are 13 park and open space sites within the Sugar Grove Planning Area as shown on Figure 4. Each site varies in size, intensity and development. The 13 existing parks within Sugar Grove include:

- # Black Walnut Park is a neighborhood park located along Black Walnut Drive.*
- # Bliss Park is a neighborhood park located along Spruce Street.*
- # Chelsea Park is a neighborhood park accessible from Bristol Court.*
- # Dugan Park East is a neighborhood park in the Dugan Woods neighborhood along Fays Lane east of Donald Street.*
- # Dugan Park West is a neighborhood park in the Dugan Woods neighborhood along Fays Lane.*
- # Mallard Park is a neighborhood park located along Mallard Lane.*

☞ *Sheffield Plains Park is a neighborhood park on the south end of Joy Court.*

☞ *Snow Park is a neighborhood park located along Calkins Drive, east of Grove Street.*

☞ *Strafford Park is a neighborhood park located west of Courtney Circle.*

☞ *Strubler Park is a neighborhood park on Terry Drive.*

☞ *Sugar Grove Sports Complex is a sports complex used for intense athletic programming, located on Wheeler Road, east of Dugan Road.*

☞ *Volunteer Park is a community park on Main Street, behind Kaneland John Shields Elementary School.*

☞ *W.R. Keck Park is a neighborhood park on at the south end of Patricia Drive.*

### **Future Parks**

Parks and open space can be used for pure aesthetic enjoyment, for passive recreation such as bird watching, nature walks and picnics, and for active recreation such as soccer, baseball or other competitive sports.

There are 2 basic types of parks within a community: neighborhood parks and community parks. Neighborhood parks are smaller in size and are ideally centrally located within a neighborhood or development. Community parks are larger in size, developed more intensely, and are better suited for recreational programming, including athletic leagues and tournaments. To preserve the safety of residential areas and to provide efficient access for visitors, community parks should be located along major streets.

The general location of future parks and open space areas is illustrated on Figure 4. The location and size of the future parks

should be construed as “conceptual” since the size and configuration are determined as the land is platted for residential development.

Neighborhood parks should be between 3 and 7 acres in size, 5 acres considered ideal. The central location of a neighborhood park ensures all residents of a development benefit from recreational amenity of the development. Neighborhood parks should provide both active and passive recreation.

Community parks have no minimum or maximum size. Community parks should protect significant natural resources within the community, and provide areas for active recreation, suitable for athletics, including lighted fields, parking areas, and field houses. The size of a community park should be need driven, with the appropriate size determined by the development objectives and park amenities needed by the community.

Residential developers should provide new neighborhood parks, as they are creating the demand by building homes and generating new populations within the community. This nexus serves as the legal principle behind the Village’s land dedication ordinance.

In general, neighborhood parks should be incorporated into all new residential development. Neighborhood parks are small parks that should be centrally located within a development or neighborhood. Neighborhood parks function as a local, “close to home” park site, providing both active and passive recreation opportunities conveniently to nearby residents.

Administration of the Land Dedication Ordinance is critical to successful implementation and achievement of the Parks, Open Space and Greenways Plan. Although considered open space, a property that is used for stormwater management or that is below the flood

plain provides limited recreation potential. The Park District and Village should not accept these sites as park donations, for the very same reasons developers view these areas as liabilities. Park donations should be “high-and-dry” and suitable for recreational uses.

Community parks are not acquired and developed like neighborhood parks. Community parks are not typically provided by one developer, and materialize by administering the Land Dedication Ordinance in a different fashion.

Since community parks are larger in size and serve several developments and neighborhoods, the burden of providing a community park cannot be borne by one developer/development. Instead, the Village and Park District should accept cash-in-lieu of a land donation where parks are not required or desirable. This often occurs when small parcels are developed and a park donation would be too small (i.e. less than 3 acres), or if an existing neighborhood park currently provides service to the new development. Cash received instead of a land donation can be used to finance the acquisition and development of community parks.

The ideal location for community parks within Sugar Grove is adjacent to the waterways and greenways, as illustrated in Figure 5. Active recreation such as team sports or playgrounds should be located, planned and designed so that their normal use will not interfere with the enjoyment of adjacent land owners nor degrade the natural resources and ecosystems within the open space network.

Other types of parks include sports complexes and special use facilities such as gymnasiums and swimming pools. The demand and need for these facilities should be determined by the Sugar Grove Park District, and they should be located in a similar fashion to community parks. In general, the Village should support the

development of park and recreational amenities provided residential areas are protected from their negative impacts, including noise, light and traffic.

#### *Other Park, Open Space and Recreational Features*

Several other park and open space areas contribute to the image and identity of Sugar Grove, and provide recreational and leisure-time opportunities for residents of the Village. These features, also highlighted in Figure 5, include the following:

**##Wooded Areas.** In addition to the wooded areas along and near the greenway corridors, there are numerous mature woodlands and tree lines located in other portions of Sugar Grove’s planning area that are not yet subdivided. The Village should work with land developers to preserve and protect these important natural features in the future.

**##Schools.** Local schools can play an important role in providing recreational services. Kaneland South Elementary School in Sugar Grove has both outdoor and indoor recreational facilities that serve various needs within the community. In addition to Kaneland South Elementary School, 1 high-school/middle school campus and 2 elementary schools are planned.

**##Golf Courses.** Golf courses provide recreation to residents, preserve large areas of open space, create scenic views, and can be used to provide stormwater storage. There are 4 golf courses within the Village of Sugar Grove’s Planning Area. Bliss Creek Golf Course is a privately owned golf club located along IL 56/US 30. Bliss Creek provides 18-holes of golf to the public. Deer Valley is a 9-hole executive course located in Big Rock Forest Preserve in the southwest section of the Village, north of Jericho Road. The Black Sheep

Golf Club is a 27-hole members only course, located on Seavy Road. A private golf course, not available to the public is located west of Dugan Road, south of Granart Road. The Village of Sugar Grove should encourage operational improvements to the facility to improve safety, as the club house and maintenance facility are located on east side of Dugan Road while the course is located on the west side of Dugan Road. Dugan Road is a proposed major arterial road, and the relocation of these facilities would improve the safety of players and motorists. At a minimum, the grade separated crossing for golfers, golf carts, and maintenance equipment, should be maintained, while the relocation of the facilities to the west side of the road should be encouraged.

This Plan supports the perpetual use of this golf course, regardless of its ownership and operation. If the facility ceases to operate or the property owner has intentions to redevelop the site, the Village should work with the Forest Preserve, Park District or private land owner to allow the facility to continue to operate.

**Utility Corridors.** While the presence of overhead electrical transmission lines are in stark contrast to the natural character of the area, these public rights-of-way do create open space corridors with potential for use as recreational pathways, landscape treatments, and aesthetic enhancements, particularly at locations where they cross major roadways. These corridors can provide safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways that are separated from vehicular traffic.

#### ***Future Open Space Requirements***

All new residential developments within the designated Growth Areas of the Land Use Plan should incorporate at least 40 percent of the gross area as open space. This policy is intended to preserve, in

perpetuity, open spaces and areas of particular natural resource value as an integral part of all types of development projects.

Open spaces to be dedicated as a part of new developments should include “high-and-dry” neighborhood parks, greenway corridors, and could also include wildlife habits, wetlands, wooded areas, natural vegetation, and recreational trails.

Maintenance responsibilities for open space should be established at the time of development approval. Undesirable open space areas, such as stormwater management facilities could be maintained by a property owners association, or a not-for-profit corporation, provided a public agency (such as the Village, Park District, or Forest Preserve District, School District, Township, etc.) does not wish to accept ownership and maintenance responsibility of the land. Ultimate ownership should be determined by the Village of Sugar Grove.

The lands along the greenway corridors should receive top priority as a part of these open space dedications. While most of the lands within the greenway corridors have natural limitations regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Village might consider leniency in other requirements, such as density, to compensate for setting aside more than the required 40 percent amount of open space. In some cases, the Village could work with a petitioner to seek purchase of the open space by one of the public agencies.

The open space dedication recommended in the *Comprehensive Plan* is a guideline that could be modified on a project-by-project basis, depending upon the character of the site and the quality of the plan. If a development has extensive wetlands and/or stormwater detention or retention areas, the amount of open space could exceed 40 percent. Where open space is well planned to meet the

objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*, trade-offs could be considered in terms of smaller lots than the underlying zoning in exchange for creative cluster/open space and conservation design.

For example, cluster/open space design is a site planning technique that concentrates buildings on a part of the site in order to preserve the remaining land for recreation, open space, agriculture or the preservation of environmentally important features. This type of development allows a reduction in lot area provided there is no significant increase in the number of lots that would be permitted under a conventional subdivision. Conservation design rearranges the development on each parcel as it is being planned so that half (or more) of the buildable land is set aside as open space.

The way to protect greenway corridors and open spaces is through the plan review process. Most important in this effort is the setting aside of areas with special environmental and ecological value for protection from development. The designated open space within a project should incorporate the greenway corridors as a priority. Setbacks from roadways, detention ponds and easements could also be included when they are improved for active or passive recreational use. This process preserves open space, habitat for wildlife, and corridors for the natural flow of stormwater and the movement of wildlife. These corridors are identified in the *Comprehensive Plan*.

As new areas of unique natural resources are identified, they should be added to the greenway corridors or areas identified as "Other Environmental Resources to be Preserved" as shown in the Land Use Plan.

- Existing Park
- Proposed Neighborhood Park
- Forest Preserve
- Camp Dean
- Other Existing/Future Open Space
- Golf Course
- Greenway
- Wetland
- Forested Area
- Airport
- Village of Sugar Grove Planning Area
- Stream/Watercourse

Figure 5:  
**Parks, Open Space  
& Greenways Plan**

